

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 DHA-02 AID-05 TRSE-00

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

PC-01 SSC-01 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-02

/106 W

-----181835Z 125930 /46

P R 181725Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5205

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SL

SUBJ: SIERRA LEONE: ELECTION ROUND-UP V, APRIL 7-18

REF: FREETOWN 1225

1. SUMMARY: NOMINATION DAY, APRIL 15, WAS MARKED BY CONSIDERABLE VIOLENCE WITH SEVEN DEATHS ADMITTED PUBLICLY AND ABOUT TWICE THAT MANY NOT YET ADMITTED PUBLICLY. THIRTY-FOUR APC PARLIAMENTARIANS ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN ELECTED UNOPPOSED, BUT THERE ARE CRIES OF FOUL FROM SLPP CANDIDATES IN SEVERAL CONSTITUENCIES AND A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES HAVE BEEN FILED. THIRTY-TWO FORMER APC MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, INCLUDING
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THREE CURRENT FORMER MINISTERS, WERE NOT NOMINATED FOR RE-ELECTION. SLPP CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTESTING IN 48 CONSTITUENCIES, DNP CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTESTING IN ONLY FOUR CONSTITUENCIES, AND 61 INDEPENDANT CANDIDATES WILL CONTEST. TEN OF TWELVE APC PARAMOUNT CHIEFS ARE UNOPPOSED. SINCE THE PRESIDENT CAN APPOINT THREE PARLIAMENTARIANS, APC IS ASSURED OF 47 OF 100 SEATS EVEN BEFORE ELECTION DAY, UNLESS CHALLENGES ARE

ACCEPTED, END SUMMARY.

2. VIOLENCE, SOMETIMES APPROACHING OPEN WARFARE IN INTENSITY, ERUPTED IN ALMOST EVERY DISTRICT CAPITAL ON NOMINATION DAY AS RIVAL CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT PRESENTED, OR TRIED TO PRESENT, THEIR NOMINATION PAPERS. WORST INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN BONTHE DISTRICT OF THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE. THE NUMBER OF DEAD AS A RESULT OF PARTY RIVALRY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY PROBABLY NEVER WILL BE KNOWN, BUT IT EASILY COULD BE SEVERAL TIMES OFFICIAL FIGURES.

3. IN THE WESTERN AREA (FREETOWN AND SURROUNDING PENINSULA) AND IN THE SLPP STRONGHOLDS OF THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES, GOVERNMENT WENT TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTHS TO ALLOW ALL WHO WANTED TO FILE NOMINATIONS TO DO SO. IN BONTHE, HOWEVER, A TRADITIONAL SLPP STRONGHOLD AND SCENE OF THE WORST CONFRONTATIONS, SLPP CANDIDATES WERE PREVENTED FROM FILING AND ALL APC CANDIDATES ARE CONSIDERED AS BEING UNOPPOSED. IN MOST OF THE APC-DOMINATED NORTHERN PROVINCE "FREE AND FAIR" NOMINATIONS WERE ACTIVELY PREVENTED. ONLY IN KOINADUGU DISTRICT (KABALA) WERE OPPOSITION AND INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES PERMITTED TO PRESENT THEIR NOMINATIONS. ELSEWHERE IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE ALL APC CANDIDATES WERE RETURNED UNOPPOSED. SLPP REPORTEDLY HAS PROTESTED TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION THE "ATMOSPHERE" IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE, WHICH PRECLUDED SLPP CANDIDATES FROM FILING NOMINATIONS PAPERS. AT LEAST THREE SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS ALSO HAVE BEEN LODGED CONCERNING THE DISQUALIFICATION OF NON-APC CANDIDATES IN THREE WESTERN AREA CONSTITUENCIES.

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4. THREE CURRENT MINISTERS, SAHR GANDI-CAPIO, ENERGY AND POWER; NATHAN A.P. BUCK, INFORMATION; AND GEORGE GOBIO LAMIN, LABOR; WERE NOT RENOMINATED BY THE APC. GANDI-CAPIO, HOWEVER, IS CONTESTING HIS SEAT FROM KONO NORTH AS AN INDEPENDENT. SHEKU S. MAGONA RECENTLY FIRED AS RESIDENT MINISTER, SOUTHERN PROVINCE (FREETOWN 411), RETAINED THE APC SYMBOL AS CANDIDATE FROM PUJEHUN NORTH, AND FORMER AGRICULTURAL MINISTER, S.A.T. KOROMA, WHO PRESENTLY IS UNDER INDICTMENT FOR LARCENY (FREETOWN A-61, DECEMBER 8, 1976), RETAINED THE SYMBOL FOR PORT LOKO SOUTH.

5. THE NEWLY FORMED DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL PARTY (DNP) HAS PROVEN ITSELF SOMEWHAT OF A BUST. THE DNP NOMINATED ONLY FOUR CANDIDATES.

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6. WE HAVE HEARD FROM AN EXCELLENT SOURCE THAT COLONEL SHEKU TARAWALLI, A KORANKO TRIBESMAN AND THE BATTALION COMMANDER OF THE RSLMF, PROTESTED TO THE PRESIDENT THE DECISION TO RETAIN MINISTER OF MINES S.B. KAWUSU-KONTEH, WHO REPORTEDLY HAS BECOME EXTREMELY WEALTHY SINCE BECOMING MINISTER OF MINES. KONTEH IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE MORE VIOLENCE PRONE APC MEMBERS AND ALLEGEDLY MAINTAINS AN ARSENAL OF WEAPONS AND A SQUAD OF THUGS. WE ATTRIBUTE THE FACT THAT THE ONLY OPPOSITION CANDIDATES TO CONTEST THE APC IN THE NORTH ARE FROM KOINADUGU DISTRICT, PARTIALLY AS A REFLECTION ON KAWUSU-KONTEH'S UNPOPULARITY.

7. PRESIDENT STEVENS MADE A SURPRISE RADIO BROADCAST BOTH NIGHT OF APRIL 17 AND MORNING OF APRIL 18, IN WHICH HE DEPLORED THE DEATHS OF SEVEN APC PARTY STALWARTS AND SAID THAT OTHERS

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WERE REPORTED MISSING. IN A THINLY VEILED STATEMENT HE WARNED THE SLPP THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO MEET VIOLENCE WITH VIOLENCE AND CAUTIONED SLPP SUPPORTERS NOT TO TRY TO CONGREGATE IN FREETOWN IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE AS THEY RE-

PORTEDLY WERE PLANNING TO DO. HE NOTED PUBLICLY THAT GOVERNMENT-OWNED LUMBER COMPANY IN KENEMA WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND APRIL 17. AS OF 1400 LOCAL, APRIL 18, DISTURBANCES WERE REPORTED IN THE OFTEN TROUBLED EAST SIDE OF FREETOWN, BUT WE BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFICIENT FORCE TO CONTROL ANY DISTURBANCE.

8. SIERRA LEONE LABOR CONGRESS PLANNING COMMITTEE IS TO MEET AFTERNOON APRIL 18 TO DETERMINE POSSIBLE LABOR ACTION TO PROTEST CONTINUING RESTRICTIONS BEING PLACED ON SLPP. A WELL INFORMED SOURCE STATED THE COMMITTEE MAY ASK FULL LABOR CONGRESS TO REQUEST A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT STEVENS TO PROTEST THE FAILURE TO HAVE FREE AND FAIR NOMINATIONS, SINCE STEVENS EARLIER HAD PROMISED THIS TO THE CONGRESS. SAME SOURCE ALSO SUGGESTED CONGRESS MAY BE ASKED TO CALL FOR INDUSTRIAL WALKOUTS IF NO SATISFACTION IS OBTAINED FROM THE PRESIDENT.

9. WITH THE UNIVERSITY CLOSED FOR EASTER VACATION UNTIL APRIL 26, POTENTIAL STUDENT UNREST HAS NO FOCUS. HOWEVER, VACATION MEANS THAT MOST STUDENTS ARE UPCOUNTRY WHERE, PERHAPS NOT UNCONNECTEDLY, CURRENT UNREST IS MOST PREVALENT.

10. TOMORROW IS SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF SIERRA LEONE'S BECOMING A REPUBLIC. ABSENT FROM CELEBRATIONS IS TRADITIONAL ARMY PARADE. SPECULATION IS WIDESPREAD THAT GOSL IS RELUCTANT TO ASSEMBLE ARMY IN GROUP.
SAMUELS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 FREETOWN 1225
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2778563
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIERRA LEONE: ELECTION ROUND-UP V, APRIL 7-18
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SL
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/227b3aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009